

**Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  
**Thursday, September 12, 2002**  
**Raintree Resort Hotel and Conference Center**  
**Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin**

**MINUTES**

*Electronically approved 11-8-02*

**Council Members:** Alex Slappey, Chair; Sarah Benton, Vice Chair; Jason Altman (new member); John Boyer; Linda Jennison; Twyla Niedfeldt; and Helen Rizzi

**BDHH Staff:** Linda Huffer (BDHH Interim Director) and Alice Sykora (BDHH Central Office and Council Liaison)

**Visitors:** Todd Behana (Wisconsin Relay Service); Kim Bruno (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation); Amy Fryman (Professional Interpreting Enterprise, Inc.); Denise Johnson (AODA, IndependentFirst); Billy Mauldin (Wisconsin Relay Service); and Elizabeth Seeliger (Sound Beginnings, Bureau of Family and Community Health, Children with Special Health Care Needs Program, Department of Health and Family Services)

**Interpreters:** Mary Lynn Rose; Sandi Peplinski; Laurie Sanheim; and Anne Eaton

**Real-Time Captioner:** Lynn Ettl

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Welcome/Approval of Minutes/Housekeeping:**

The minutes from the March 13, 2002 meeting, as written, were approved electronically.

**Council Reports:**

**Chair's Report (Alex Slappey):**

- The Council received and acknowledged [a letter from Dr. Philip Giampietro](#), a clinical geneticist who presented at the Champions Conference and whose comments were a subject of discussion at the last Council meeting. He requested that the Council change the comments in those minutes because he felt they were not reflective of his statement at the Conference. The Council feels the minutes are purported to record what is said at a meeting, whether they are accurate or not.
- There is a prevalent perception, especially among hard of hearing individuals, that the Council historically tends to focus more on the needs of deaf people, instead of hard of hearing people. Hard of hearing people feel their needs are different from those of deaf people. Two legislative initiatives were on hard of hearing issues and

the Council and communities need to continue to support them. In this meeting, there would be a discussion on hard of hearing issues and concerns, among them lack of hard of hearing Council representation and getting appropriate information that would enhance the Council's effectiveness in serving hard of hearing people.

- Rick Postl has resigned as a Council member due to a career move out of state, which affects the Council's representation to the Statewide Independent Living Council. This brings the total to three for the Council vacancies.
- Because of the state budget constraints, the Council needs to look at finding means to reduce Council expenses, which BDHH covers. More cuts are expected.
- Some time will be devoted during this meeting to legislative initiatives. The Council will look at and narrow down initiatives it plans to concentrate its energy and time on. Participation and involvement of people outside of the Council is very welcome.
- The WITA recommendations that were submitted by a Council-appointed subcommittee were approved electronically in May and submitted to BDHH and DSL for consideration and/or implementation.
- An election will be held during the New Business at this meeting for a new Chair, Vice Chair and Corresponding Secretary. Alex cannot continue as Chair but will serve as the Ex-Officio for the Council in his role as Director of the Wisconsin School for the Deaf.

#### **Vice Chair Report (Sarah Benton):**

- **Interpreter Licensure Initiative:** This licensure draft is in its finishing stages, with revisions and recommendations being inserted. There are a few potential sponsors in the Legislature who may work on this initiative. Because elections are happening in the fall, no legislative action will be undertaken until after the elections.
- **State Courts Orientation Training for Interpreters Working in the Court Systems:** An orientation program statewide has been established for all interpreters of spoken and sign languages. The Wisconsin Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf already offers an extensive legal interpreting training program that far surpasses the state orientation program. However, for sign language interpreters to be on the state court list they must complete this orientation. No waiver or compensation is given. Regardless, this is an opportunity for all interpreters to receive the same baseline information and to share common information relevant to court interpreting situations.

#### **DAWN Report (Twyla Niedfeldt):**

- DAWN provided a series of advocacy trainings all over the state in the spring. Twyla attended one in her county. While the information was helpful, communication access was not available or up to par. Training the organizers of DAWN advocacy trainings about communication access is needed.
- The Council needs to maximize the resources DAWN offers (Sarah Benton's comment).

#### **Nominations Committee (Linda Jennison):**

- Relating to the Council vacancies, the by-laws require that the Council have the composition of three deaf, three hard of hearing, one deaf-blind, one parent, and one member-at-large representatives. Currently, the Council is short one deaf and one hard of hearing representatives. Jason Altman is now on board and replaces Eve

Dicker-Eiseman. There is a hard of hearing applicant who the Council is recommending to the Governor to approve. The process might be hampered because of the gubernatorial elections.

**UNHS Report (Linda Jennison):**

- The last UNHS meeting Linda attended was in May. The eighth issue of the AHDI newsletter came out in August, which featured an article, in Q&A format, written by Alice Sykora on Deaf Culture.

**Wisconsin Blue Ribbon Commission Implementation Committee Report (Eve Dicker-Eiseman):**

- Written report submitted in advance

**Legislative and Policy Committee of the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health Report (Eve Dicker-Eiseman):**

- Written report submitted in advance

**Mental Health/AODA Subcommittee Report (Ron Sanders):**

- This committee has had four meetings throughout the summer. One highlight was an enlightening presentation at one of the meetings by Eloweza Altro, the community outreach director of the Milwaukee Chapter of Mental Health Association. She talked about the “invisible children” program that she runs at the Association. It was an opportune time for her to meet with this committee because she is a member of the National Alliance for Mental Illness (N.A.M.I.). She will return to speak before this committee to talk about SOAR (Searchbase Online and Accommodation Resources). A byproduct of this learning session is the establishment of a joint workgroup of the N.A.M.I. group and this committee because of the similarities of the mental illness and struggles of minority groups and the deaf group. The goal is to work together in obtaining grants so these groups can be better served.
- Ron traveled to Fond du Lac to meet with the regional AA District 75 Special Needs Education Commission. They were interested in knowing about interpreter services and confidentiality and how they apply to AA meetings and services, and how to make them more effective for deaf and hard of hearing people who are trying to get or remain sober. Ron has been invited to talk about Deaf Culture at the district’s spring conference.
- Denise Johnson is now the new AODA Coordinator. Ron has enlisted her to serve on the Mental Health Committee. Denise’s position is state-funded and contracted with IndependenceFirst in Milwaukee.

**SILC Report (Alice Sykora):**

- Alice attended the SILC Summit on May 28<sup>th</sup>. The focus of the meeting was on the various drafts of position papers that different disability groups, organizations and agencies created. The summit was an opportunity to discuss and vote on the papers. The Council has received copies of the position papers. Because Alice is not a voting member of the Council, she could not cast votes on the position papers.

- Alice emphasized the importance of maintaining the Council's presence in SILC. A Council member can vote on any issue, but Alice cannot, because of her state employee status. She would continue to attend meetings as needed to provide consistency of attendance and give information or share feedback.

#### **Council Website Report (John Boyer):**

- There was not a great deal to report. The website seems to be basic.

Linda Jennison asked if the website is continuing to be developed, and whether information will be added. Alice Sykora reported that she is in the process of being trained as a web developer so that information is consistent, current and time-sensitive.

#### **Other Reports:**

- With the departure of Cassie Schellfeffer, Ron Sanders has temporarily assumed the responsibility of the coordination of the Milwaukee Regional Office services, in addition to the services of his office in Waukesha.

#### **BDHH Report (Linda Huffer and Alice Sykora):**

- **Regional Coordinators:**
  - There are two Regional Coordinator vacancies at the Southeastern Region II and Northern Region offices. The Department of Health and Family Services has given the approval to fill the positions. The Council was thanked for its letter of support to the Department to have these positions filled. Postings and announcements will be made very soon.
  - A Regional Coordinator Manual is being developed, so it will be handy for any new Regional Coordinator who comes on board.
- **CSA:**
  - The Southeastern Region I and II offices have a new CSA, and her name is Amber Jirschele. She will be dividing her time between these two offices.
  - There is a CSA opening for the Central Office as well as Green Bay.
  - Recruitment and hiring of CSAs is difficult because the salary and benefits are not as attractive as other interpreting jobs or opportunities. As well, the funding is GPR and it is difficult to request additional funding especially at a time of budget cuts and reductions. Nevertheless, BDHH is taking a hard look at the situation and considering ways to make the CSA positions attractive and marketable.
- **BDHH Budget:** BDHH had to endure a \$59,800 cut from its budget and it greatly affects a lot of services it provides. BDHH anticipates it will face another round of cuts. Out-of-state travel had to be eliminated, and in-state travel and services & supplies are more closely scrutinized and monitored. Council expenditures are being looked at.
- **WITA Recommendations:** With regard to this, BDHH had not had the opportunity to review and address them, largely because BDHH had a changeover of

directorship and other major projects took priority. However, the recommendations will be the focus for the BDHH Central Office during the fall.

- **Department of Corrections:** Not much activity to report relating to the Department of Corrections, except for a training session Bette Mentz-Powell provided this summer to the staff at the Oakhill Corrections facility. This is a start, and hopefully the other Regional Coordinators will be able to provide trainings at the other correctional facilities. Linda plans to reactivate the discussion with the DOC. A brochure specifically for the staff at correctional facilities has been developed. Not only does it explain the continuum of deafness or hearing loss or communication choices; it also includes ADA information and community resources.
- **TEPP Administrator Position:** It is on hold until after the November elections. The administrator at the Public Services Commission felt that the time was not right to open and grant the position to BDHH. She had some concerns about the situation. Whichever way, lines of communication will remain open.
- **BDHH Priorities:** Because BDHH has a significant contract with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to do employment-related activities, this area is a top priority. BDHH is developing a strategic plan with specific outcomes. The plan will not be extensive or broad based because of limited staff and monetary resources. When the plan is in place, it will be shared with the Council.
- **DVR Workplan:** The workplan includes five areas: DVR/BDHH working collaboration; VRI/VRS services at Job Centers; training of DVR counselors, Job Center staff, and DVR-partnered employers and employment agencies; technical assistance; and transition services. The most important and biggest focus for BDHH is the VRI/VRS services. DVR is implementing technology at selected Job Centers and after the BDHH staff is trained in its use, they will perform training to staff at the Job Centers and for DVR staff as well as deaf and hard of hearing consumers.
- **Service Fund:** The administrative rule changes for the Service Fund (HFS 77) have been finalized and submitted to legislative committees for review. If they are approved, the changes will take effect in January 2003. The funding for the Service Fund for the fiscal year 2002 has been more or less depleted. Because of the rule and funding changes in the Service Fund, BDHH is keeping close tabs on requests, both approved and denied, and ensuring that they are within the priority and non-priority criteria.
- **TAP:** A Statement of Scope has been submitted requesting minor changes in the Telecommunication Assistance Program (HFS 78). Among the changes are the number of applicants per household who can qualify for TAP; reduction of the years an application is good for; and some terminology changes.

#### **Hard of Hearing Issues (Twyla Niedfeldt):**

- There have been some communications within the SHHH membership and between SHHH and BDHH/Council about hard of hearing issues. Following are some main themes:

- Awareness: Many hard of hearing people have never heard of BDHH or the Council; they have no idea of how these entities relate to them. Front line service providers (e.g., doctors, audiologists, ENTs) that the hard of hearing people go to do not have information about or have the knowledge to make referrals to BDHH or the Council.
- Perception of BDHH and Council: That they are so deaf-focused. Terminology and priorities seem to tilt towards deaf people and activities.
- Clarification on "System Approach" vs. "One-to-One" services provided by BDHH: Many hard of hearing people are not familiar with "system" approach definitions or parameters. Further clarification needs to be made as to when and how services can be appropriately requested. A clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Regional Coordinators is needed.
- Regional Inconsistencies: Each region vary in its delivery or approval of services. For instance, one region would approve funding for real time captioning services for a meeting, but another region would deny a similar request for the same kind of event. Also, the degree of Regional Coordinator involvement in SHHH local activities vary statewide.
- BDHH "Hard of Hearing Expertise:" BDHH needs training and understanding in psychological differences between deaf and hard of hearing, technology available for hard of hearing, and communication needs.
- Employment Opportunities and Hiring Practices for Hard of Hearing at BDHH: One of the requirements of any BDHH position is the ability to use ASL fluently. Many hard of hearing people do not use ASL and this requirement discourages them to apply.

#### **DVR Update (Kim Bruno):**

- The joint DVR/BDHH meeting is slated for November 7<sup>th</sup> in Sheboygan. Vince Holmes is serving as a DVR liaison to BDHH.
- The first VRS/VR service will take place at the Walworth Job Center in Elkhorn. The rest will be implemented during the fall.
- DVR has implemented its new hearing aid policy requiring audiologists to list breakdown costs for hearing aids if their clients are DVR consumers.
- DVR prepared statistical reports for 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 that show the number of deaf and hard of hearing individuals being serviced by DVR.

#### **Presentation: Statewide Independent Living Council (Scott Durren)**

- Every state has a SILC that is in conjunction with Vocational Rehabilitation; the VR provides funding for independent living services. Each SILC must develop a state plan for independent living, which is in accordance with the needs of people with disabilities in a state. No state plan means no funding. The goal of SILC in Wisconsin is to speak as one voice.
- To develop the state plan, 14 listening sessions were conducted statewide to solicit feedback and issues of concern from people with various disabilities. This resulted in the identification of eight objectives to include in the state plan. Unfortunately, there was insufficient input from the deaf and hard of hearing communities.
- One of the objectives is employment and vocational related. A Job Center analysis tool has been developed to assess program access and physical access. Scott did

his best to include components that would illustrate accessibility for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

- There have been several Disability Summits that had the participation of different Councils. This was an attempt to bring the Councils to coordinate and collaborate on issues together and have one voice. It has not been a smooth ride, because those who had voting authority were not always present to vote on issues representative of their constituencies.

### **Legislative Initiative Workgroup:**

The Council needs to establish a workgroup that will focus on legislative initiatives for the upcoming biennial budget period. More people to participate in the process are needed. The Council will look at and choose at least two or three legislative goals. Alex presented two questions: What initiatives are we interested in? Do we want to keep the same model that was used in previous legislative activities? The interpreter licensure initiative is a certain thing. Initiatives on hearing aid insurance coverage and strengthening of universal newborn hearing screening and follow-up services are two possibilities. Any development regarding BDHH budget will be considered.

The workgroup can get geared up before the Council meets in December, with Sarah, Alex and Twyla involved and Alice providing technical assistance. Other Council members and interested members of the deaf and hard of hearing communities are welcome.

### **New Business:**

- **Elections of New Officers for 2002-2003:**
  - Sarah Benton, Chair
  - Twyla Niedfeldt, Vice Chair
  - Helen Rizzi, Corresponding Secretary
- **Ad Hoc Representation on the Council:** The issue on ad hoc representation was discussed. This came about because Elizabeth Seeliger from the Sound Beginning Program expressed an interest in serving on the Council as an ad hoc representative on Birth-to-3, Sound Beginnings and UNHS matters.

#### **Points:**

- Different Councils use ad hoc members differently. Fundamentally, a Council ad hoc member has a right to sit on a Council but does not have voting rights.
- A Council ad hoc member usually represents a group that has vested interests in the Council, BDHH or the deaf and hard of hearing community (e.g., UNHS, University of Wisconsin System, or an agency within the Department of Health and Family Services). The Council decides the type and extent of ad hoc representation.
- They can offer information and viewpoints from their representative groups and try to influence the Council to vote in a certain way.
- Some Councils have ad hoc members in their subcommittees. They attend subcommittee meetings but do not necessarily sit on the Council. They may attend Council meetings if there are relevant issues.

- Travel and meal expenses are covered for Council ad hoc members as well as subcommittee ad hoc members, unless their agencies or organizations cover these expenses because of the relevance to their jobs or the organization.
- Many Councils do not always have a full slate of members, so ad hoc members, while non-voting, can serve to compensate the void, especially when there are immediate or pressing matters.

Concerns addressed by the Council on ad hoc representation:

- Money
- Ad hoc representation could skew the composition, as defined by the by-laws, of the Council
- Types of ad hoc representations

It was agreed that this issue would be further addressed at the December meeting.

- **Council Effectiveness:**

When the Legislature returns and begins a new session in January, this is the opportune time for the Council to present its initiatives and develop strategies to get the communities to work with the legislators. As well, this Council needs to work with the other Councils, a point underscored by Scott Durren.

- **Budget:**

During the 2001-2002 year, roughly \$10,000 was spent for three meeting on Council expenses (the May meeting was cancelled due to lack of quorum).

Ideas to cut down Council expenses include:

- Meeting in the southern part of the state such as Madison or Milwaukee (where most members and communication access service providers reside and work in, thereby reducing the need to pay overnight accommodations)
- Meeting time starts a little later, which gives people more time to drive in
- Reducing meeting sessions from four to three per year

The concern remains for the Council about the statewide visibility and ability to accomplish goals and tasks.

BDHH will compile, and bring to the December meeting, a report of breakdowns on expenses.

**Public Comments:**

Todd Behana from the Wisconsin Telecommunications Relay Service (WTRS) officially introduced the new Director of the WTRS, Billy Mauldin to the Council. Also, WTRS has a new Customer Service Representative, Ted Trencamp. He announced that WTRS will have three town hall meetings this fall at the following sites: Wisconsin School for the Deaf, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and in Madison. WTRS also has seen an increase in home visits, whereby individuals with hearing loss are trained to use communication technology, including Voice Carry Over (VCO), and how to use the Relay Service. The WTRS staff has been providing training to staff at independent living centers and nursing homes.



Sarah Benton detailed the 150<sup>th</sup> year anniversary celebration at the Wisconsin School for the Deaf on September 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. Not only is it homecoming weekend for WSD, but there will be a gala on Saturday evening. Between 1,000 to 2,000 people are expected on campus that weekend.

Elizabeth Seeliger reported that the Sound Beginnings Program, in collaboration with the Wisconsin Speech and Hearing Association (WSHA), is giving an intensive training to audiologists. WSHA will have its state convention in March 2003 here in Madison and Alice Sykora has been invited to give a presentation on Deaf Culture, along with Marika Kovacs-Houlihan, state coordinator of the Deaf Mentor Program. Sound Beginnings is developing a Parent Notebook, a resource guide, for parents of newly-identified deaf and hard of hearing babies. A Parent Forum is being organized for parents to make statewide recommendations for a parent-to-parent support network, and the Council was asked to enlist parents who might be interested in attending.

The Council gave its gratitude to Alex Slappey for his long service to and chairmanship of the Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.